PARK LAKE
TRACT G

PARK LAKE - TRACT G

Introduction

The Park Lake tract was acquired by FWP in 1958 using 10 percent Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (Wallop-Breaux) funds and 90 percent FWP license money. The property includes the lake itself, a narrow buffer area around its perimeter, a stretch of Lump Creek south of Park Lake, and various beaver ponds. The area historically was used for mining. The man-made lake is fed by the Park Ditch, a tributary of Lump Gulch Creek, and is drained by Lump Gulch Creek.

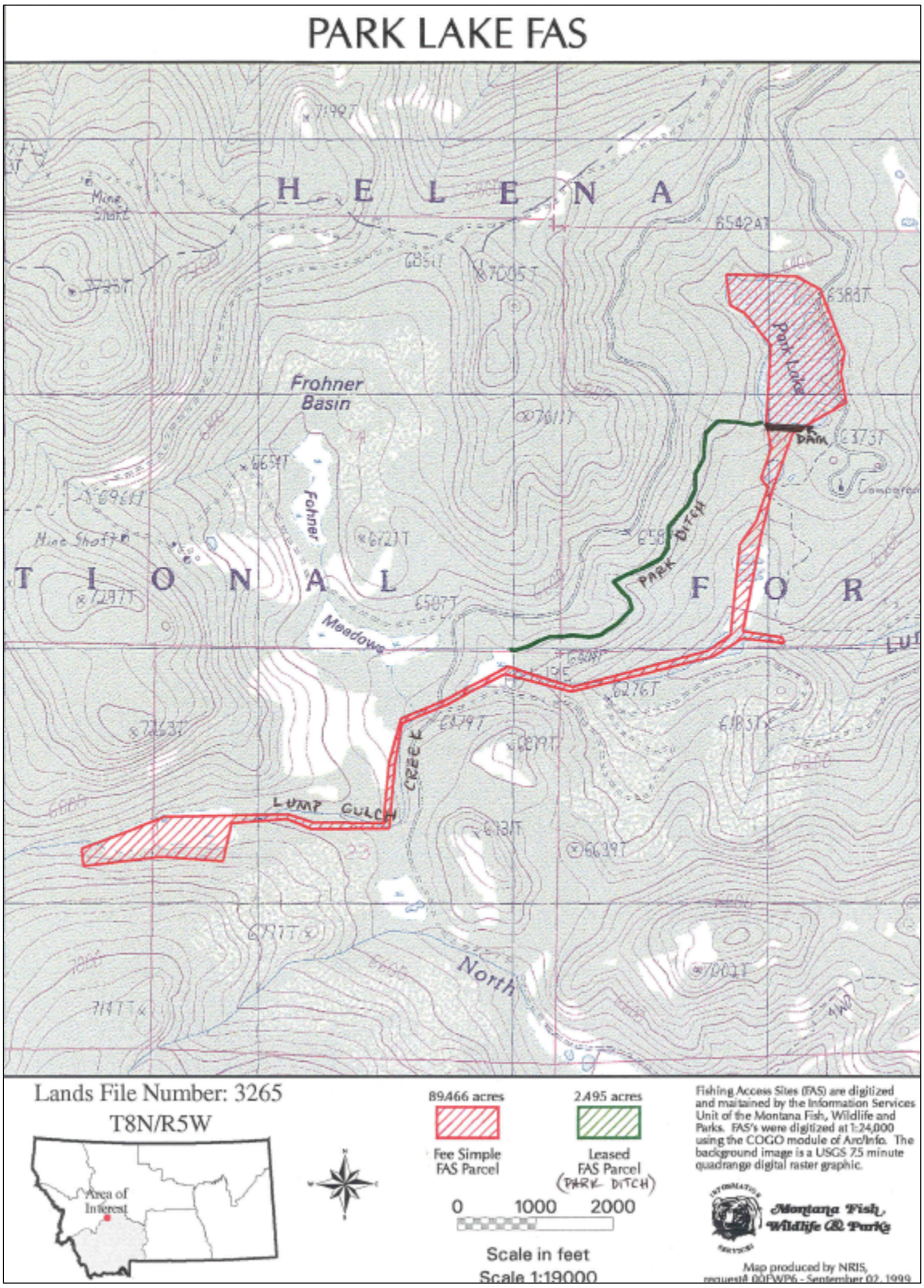
Recreational use, including fishing, is currently the primary use of the property. FS owns property surrounding the FWP tract and maintains a modern fee campground just south of the lake, which is popular with Helena Valley residents and out-of-area visitors, as well. FWP allows undesignated free camping along the north and east perimeter of the lake and unrestricted vehicular use is common. Heavy use of this shoreline is degrading lakeshores and vegetation. There are no improvements on the state property, including property boundary signs, or any camping amenities such as picnic tables, designated fire rings, or latrines.

It is proposed that FWP transfer the Park Lake tract to the FS. The FS would then manage the land to coincide with use in the Helena National Forest, nearby campground, and recreation plans. Consolidating management responsibilities at this location particularly makes sense due to the amount of visitation at the site, the difficulty for limited numbers of FWP staff to actively manage the site, and because the FS already has facilities they maintain adjacent to this tract.

The FS estimates that 3,000 visitors use the campground area between Memorial Day and mid September, with possibly another 1000 people using the immediate lake area. FWP estimates just over 4,000 visitors annually for the entire area based on regional indicator sites.

If the land exchange is completed, the FS has tentatively outlined minor plans for the new tract and estimated costs in the Helena NF Capital Investment Program 1999-2003. Any physical changes to the site, other than maintenance activities, will require an environmental review prior to start. The FS identified recommendations for dispersed recreation, such as: three new parking areas away from the lake shoreline, a lake-side trail accessible to persons with disabilities; one toilet, picnic tables, fire rings and a bulletin board could be installed at the northern-most parking area. Overnight camping would be directed away from the lakeshore to the existing Park Lake Campground at the south end of the lake.

MAP 9. Park Lake FAS



Note that FWP Lands records and this EA indicate 95.88 acres at this tract; this digitized FWP map shows 91.96 total acres. This is a general representation of the tract and is not intended to be a definitive survey.

The dam on the south end of the lake is considered a high hazard according to the hazard potential based on the loss of human life or property damage that could occur if the structure failed. The Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM), Chapter 85-15-106(9) defines a high-hazard dam as *a dam or reservoir with an impounding capacity of 50 acre-feet or more at the maximum normal operating pool, the failure of which would be likely to cause loss of life.* ARM 36.14.20 also identifies the Criteria for Determination of a high hazard dam and falls under DNRC jurisdiction. Forest Service Manual section 7511.2(3) lists: *Hazard Assessment Classification: High Hazard. Dams built in areas where failure would likely result in loss of human life or excessive economic loss.* Generally this would involve urban or community development with more than a small number of habitable structures.

Park Lake has been issued an operating permit by the DNRC Dam Safety section to enable continued operation while reconstruction is being researched. It is proposed that FWP will retain ownership of Park Lake until such time that the dam is brought up to mutually acceptable standards between the state and federal agencies. The agencies are collaborating on the final design of the dam repair. The State Water Projects Bureau at DNRC, is leading the efforts to complete a restoration plan. Initial investigation and new design of the dam have been completed by private contracts using $175,000 funding authority from the 2001 legislature. FWP received $500,000 in license fund spending authority from the 2003 legislative session to complete dam rehabilitations at FWP sites in Montana, a portion of which will be used on the Park Lake dam. The agencies anticipate the project will be completed late in 2004 (or at least within three years-2006). Construction would be scheduled to begin after Labor Day to avoid impacts to the recreation season. Upon completion of the dam rehabilitation, the entire Park Lake tract will be transferred to the FS (in exchange for the proposed Middle Osprey FAS within Alberton Gorge) in Phase 2 of the Alberton Gorge Land Exchange.

FWP must improve the dam to meet state standards regardless of whether the exchange is completed. The FS Geotech/Dams Engineer, Doug McClelland, suggested that the estimated annual administrative and maintenance costs for the dam after the required remediation would be about $2,500 annually. Impacts from the dam rehabilitation will be evaluated in a separate environmental assessment with public review prior to the project start. This EA assesses the impacts of the transfer of Park Lake from FWP to the FS for similar continued recreation management.

The original Alberton Gorge Land Exchange proposal outlined in the Draft EA, June 2000, transferred the linear parcels of the tract along Lump Creek to the FS in Phase 1, and the lake with surrounding land and dam transferred in Phase 2. This alternative was abandoned for the current proposal, which transfers the entire Park Lake tract in Phase 2. The small linear tract has little value and was not a desirable tract for the FS to receive alone. The current Phase 2 portion of the Alberton Gorge Land Exchange allows an independently equal exchange of Park Lake for the Middle Osprey FAS (see *Alberton Gorge* section for more details) and holds value for both parties.

Property Description

Park Lake is located in the Boulder Mountains approximately 12 miles west of Clancy, Montana, just inside the western Jefferson County boundary line.

Township 8 North, Range 5 West
Sections 13, 23, 24; lot 81
Mineral Survey 732
Jefferson County, Montana
Total Acreage = 95.88 acres

The vegetation in this tract is primarily lodgepole pine and Englemann spruce forest. The understory consists of grouse whortleberry, and pinegrass. The riparian areas along Lump Gulch Creek support mostly willows and sedges, as do the wetlands at the inlets to the lake and lake edge. Approximately ¾ of the Park Lake tract consists of wetlands or riparian zones, including the lake and Lump Gulch Creek . The remaining ¼ of the property is dense woodland or meadowlands used for recreation. (*Wetlands/Riparian Areas Resource* Report, EA Engineering, Science and Technology, November 1992.)

Undesignated and heavily used trails criss-cross the acreage surrounding the lake, down to the pond directly south of the lake, between the lakes and the FS campground, and along the Park Ditch. These trails are used for foot traffic, motorcycles and off-highway vehicles (OHV).

Historically, there have been no restrictions on off road use around Park Lake (Dave Payne, Recreation Planner on the Helena NF, personal communication to Sue Dalbey, June 22, 2000). As of July 1, 2001, a multi-state decision banned all off-road vehicle use on Bureau of Land Management and NFS lands throughout Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Clancy-Unionville Travel Management EIS decision was signed in February 2003. The alternative selected by the FS limits motorized travel in the Park Lake area to the Frohner Meadows and Park Lake Roads year round and to the Lava Mountain Trail 12/2 through 10/15 (written communication from Duane Harp, Helena District Ranger, March 24, 2003). The Park Lake tract, however, was not specifically identified in the analysis (Larry Cole personal communication to Sue Dalbey, January 15, 2003). More information regarding the Clancy-Unionville Travel Management Project can be obtained from the Helena National Forest.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Physical Environment

Land Resources

(The following **minerals** information is from the Mineral Potential Report prepared for the Alberton Gorge Land Exchange and can be obtained from the U.S. Forest Service, Region 1 office in Missoula.)

The mineral estate on the Park Lake tract is owned by FWP and will be transferred to the FS if the Alberton Gorge Land Exchange is completed.

Geology, Mineralization and Mineral Activity

The Park Lake tract is located within the Upper Cretaceous Boulder Batholith, a dominantly quartz-monzonite intrusive rock. The surface appearance is typical of the batholith and includes spheroidal weathering, exfoliation and coarse-grainy, erosive surface soils. The Park Lake tract geology includes quartz monzonite and granodiorite with overlying glacial till. Most of the property is low-lying valley-bottom riparian and wetlands area, as well as Park Lake itself.

The lands of the Park Lake tract are a patented placer mining claim that straddles Lump Gulch creek. Little recorded information is available on the mining activity in the area. Limited records indicate that placer mining of a relatively small scale was conducted in the area during the mid-late 1930's and occurred intermittently, probably up until the early 1940's when gold mining was suspended due to World War II (Roby et al, 1960). In 1958, the tract was conveyed to the State of Montana and no recorded mineral activity has occurred since then (Mason, 2000). During a field reconnaissance in 1998, a small area (less than 1/10 acre) of apparent placer hand diggings was identified. These workings appeared to be at least 40 years old.

Mineral Occurrence and Development Potential

The geology of the Park Lake parcel is not favorable for the occurrence or development of leasable minerals and has been rated as unfavorable for the existence of economically recoverable hydrocarbons (Tysdal et. al, 1996). Thus, development for leasable minerals is highly unlikely. The tract is identified as permissive for the occurrence of climax molybdenum and porphyry copper type mineral deposits (Tysdal et. al, 1996). Although identified as permissive for these potential deposits, the small size of the parcel, the proximity to the developed Park Lake campground and trail system, and a depressed mineral industry in Montana makes it unlikely that mineral exploration would be proposed, much less a mine development project. Due to its location in the highly erosive Boulder Batholith region, the Park Lake tract is not favorable for the occurrence or development of mineral material type deposits.

Several positive impacts can occur with the proposed land exchange and management of this area by the Helena National Forest. Soil is currently unstable around the lakeshore and to the south where erosion, compaction and disruption occur from heavy foot traffic,

vehicles driving off roads, and OHV use. The Helena National Forest lands agent, Larry Cole, indicated that if the FS acquires the tract, the agency will develop a management plan for shoreline control and allow for reclamation of the area. Tentative plans identify parking areas away from the lakeshore and a formal lake-side path, which will reduce current unrestricted travel and vegetative and erosion impacts. These actions will allow for reclamation of the shoreline vegetation, reduce erosion, while continuing dispersed recreation.

Reconstruction of the high hazard dam is necessary to protect visitors and people residing far downstream from potential dangers of a breech. This will modify the unique physical features of this end of the lake; however, reconstruction is required by law as a safety precaution, even if the Alberton Gorge Land Exchange is not completed.

Air

Minor and temporary dust levels will occur in the future when FWP rehabilitates the dam, and the FS implements types of shoreline controls. Long term effects of shoreline stabilization, and revegetation of high use areas will likely result in less dust. No objectionable odors shall be created, nor alterations in air movement, moisture or temperature patterns. Vegetation will not be affected by any emissions of pollutants. Violation of state and federal air quality regulations is not anticipated.

Water and Flood Plains

DNRC Engineer, Rob Kingery, reports that Park Lake normal storage is 225 acre-feet, with a maximum of 423 acre-feet (DNRC Dam Safety Inspection Checklist, June 2, 1999). The fill dike, or dam was built in the 1880s to raise the lake level. Park Lake is a non-consumptive water use and seepage returns to Lump Gulch. (George Holton, Assistant Administrator of the FWP Fisheries Division, *Park Lake Narrative,* 1981). Water entering the lake is diverted from Lump Gulch upstream.

FS acquisition of Park Lake would most likely result in an increase in water quality due to management plans, which would protect the shoreline and reduce erosion. Turbidity levels would be slightly reduced if plans to limit vehicles adjacent to the shoreline are implemented to allow vegetation re-establishment

Some water quality problems do occur during cold winters, because of low dissolved oxygen when the lake surface freezes over. The decomposition of vegetation in the water depletes the oxygen, which cannot be easily replenished due to the ice. This circumstance of climate would not be changed due to a change in public agency ownership.

The man-made lake is fed by the Park Ditch, a tributary of Lump Gulch Creek, and is drained by Lump Gulch Creek. FWP would transfer the water rights (#41I-W1249-08-00 and #41I-W1908-64-00) associated with Park Lake to the FS who would continue to manage the water rights as non-consumptive use (written communication from Duane Harp, Helena District Ranger, March 24, 2003). The amount of surface water, drainage patterns and runoff, and magnitude of flood waters are expected to remain unchanged,

though special considerations may be made when dam reconstruction occurs. There will be no changes in quantity of surface or groundwater as a result of the exchange.

Risks for contamination of surface water and groundwater should decline if vehicles are restricted from the lakeshore and vicinity wetlands under FS management. The self-sustaining population of grayling in the lake indicates that water quality is currently sufficient for healthy fish populations. Several different hazardous materials tests were done at Park Lake in Fall 1999 and Spring 2000. Testing included many different locations for soil analysis, water quality and fish health. These tests revealed allowable levels of hazardous materials (Contact FWP Lands Divisions for more details). In addition, the US Geological Survey, in cooperation with the FS, completed an environmental study: *Water Quality, bed-sediment, and biological data, for streams in the upper Prickly Pear Creek watershed, Montana, 2001* by Terry Klein et al. (open file report 03-032), which will help guide the FS in future management of the area.

The *Watershed/Floodplains Resource Report* completed by EA Engineering, Science, and Technology in November, 1992 reported: "According to the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences (MDHES) Water Quality Bureau, a gold mine located upstream from Park Lake has been the source of the elevated metals concentrations in the water samples. The mine, which has since closed down, maintained a series of malfunctioning tailings ponds which frequently allowed large amounts of contaminated tailings to enter the surface water channels draining to Park Lake." Elevated levels of copper, lead, iron, manganese, and zinc were detected between 1970 and 1985 at five of the 24 water quality monitoring stations within four miles of Park Lake. This mine could affect water quality again; however, no impacts would be caused by the proposed land exchange.

No discharges caused by this exchange will violate federal or state water quality regulations.

Karl Christians, DNRC, Flood Plain Management Section Supervisor stated that the DNRC has not identified flood hazards or designated **flood plains** in the Park Lake area. (Federal Insurance Administration, Flood Hazard Boundary Map review with Sue Dalbey, June 13, 2000). Bo Stuart, Helena National Forest Hydrologist confirmed that there are no flood plains in this tract. This tract lies in granitic rolling uplands and a friable loamy glacial till and moraines geomorphic setting and as such, does not have typical flood plains (Flood Plain & Wetland Evaluation, January 10, 2001).

Vegetation, Wetlands, Prime & Unique Farmlands

The Park Lake tract is characterized by lodgepole pine and Englemann spruce forest (*Picea englemenii*) and an understory of grouse whortleberry and pinegrass (*Calamagrostis rubescens*). Wetlands and riparian areas occur adjacent to the several main lake inlets and one lake outlet as well as along the shoreline. The riparian dominating types are *Salix* species along the creeks and lake edge, and *Carex* species along the edge of the lake. The riparian areas along the associated beaver ponds and corridor following Lump Gulch also support mostly willows. (*Wetlands/Riparian Areas*

Resource Report by EA Engineering, Science and Technology, prepared for the FS in 1992.)

Sharon Scott, presale forester on the Helena National Forest, provided the following **timber** volume estimates (November 18, 1999) after reviewing aerial photos and personal communications with Helena district employees. The timbered portion of the parcel is within a riparian area, and consists of mature lodgepole pine forest type. Estimated average tree size is 12" at breast height and 60 feet tall (defect estimated to be 20%, mostly crook and sweep). The timbered portion of the parcel is estimated to be 1.00 miles long and 80 feet wide, totaling about 10 acres. It is estimated to be 10,000 board feet per acre on 10 acres. Total timber volume is estimated at 100 thousand board feet (within +/- 40% confidence error).

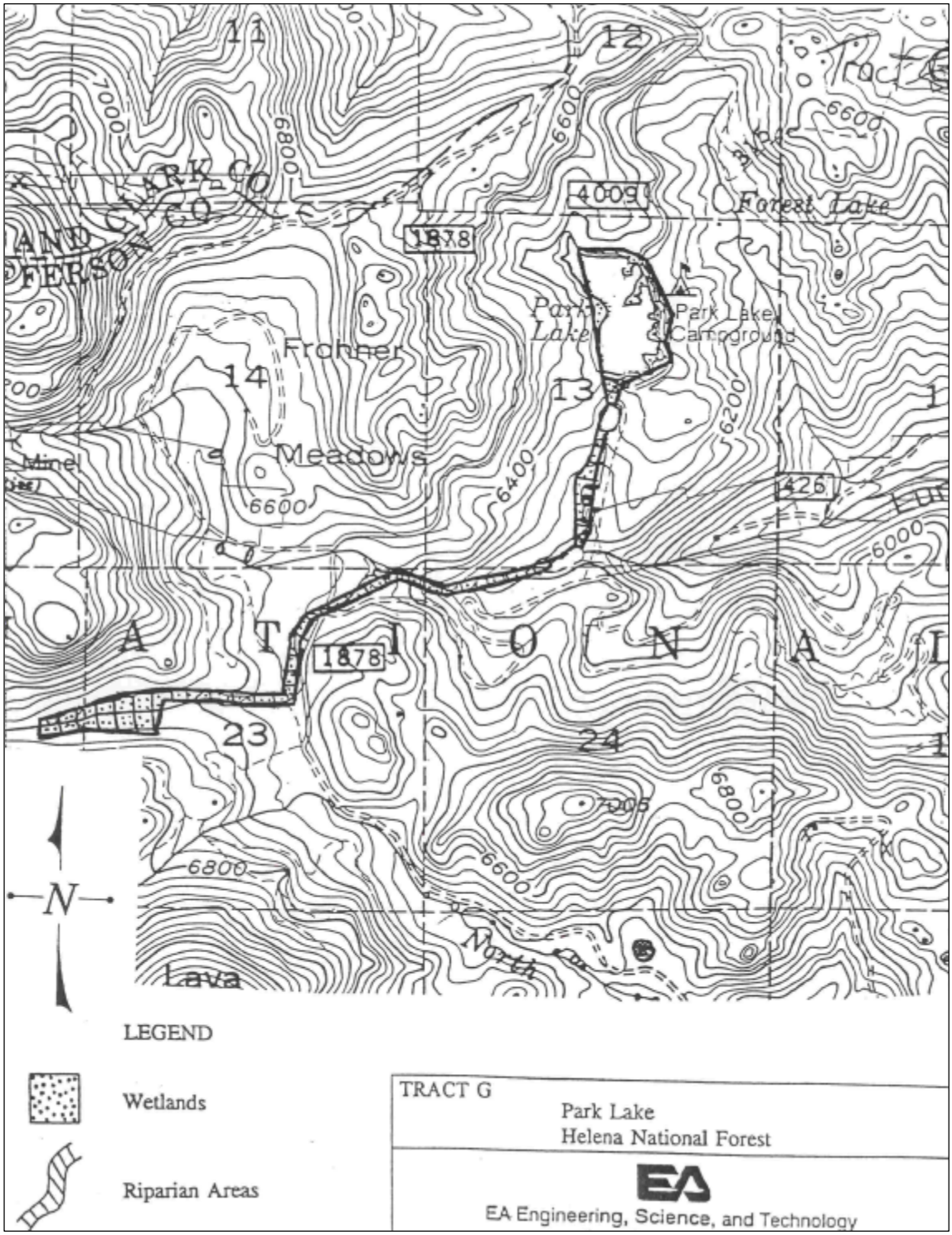
Transfer of the Park Lake tract to the FS will positively impact the riparian vegetation and protect wetlands in the long-term, as the agency intends to reclaim the shoreline areas. The productivity and abundance of plant species will increase, thus supporting the existing plant communities.

The construction of parking areas, a latrine and lake-side path will impact already disturbed vegetation in the immediate construction zone, but allow for long-term re-establishment of vegetation in surrounding areas, particularly in critical habitat zones along the lakeshore. Higher impact use (vehicles and over night camping) will be focused in the developed, hardened areas versus the entire unprotected area.

The spread of noxious weeds will decrease if the FS incorporates this area into their regular weed management plan. Limiting vehicular travel to designated routes will reduce the risks of weed establishment and spread to areas with disturbed soils.

No unique, rare, threatened or endangered plant species are recorded in the Natural Resources Information Services data base (search in August, 1999). The federally listed (threatened) plants and their critical habitat will not be affected by this project. Water Howellia (*Howellia aquatilis*) is specifically found west of the Continental Divide. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has also identified the slender moonwort (*Bortrychium lineare*) as a Candidate species, however, it has not been found in Jefferson County. It is found in meadows in conifer forests within Glacier and Lake Counties, far northeast of the Park Lake tract (US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species in Montana, Endangered Species Act. December 2002).

MAP 10 . Park Lake Wetlands Areas (approximate boundaries)



Ute Ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes diluvialis) is in river meander wetlands in Jefferson County, but not recorded in the vicinity of Park Lake. Spalding's Catchfly (Silene spaldingii) is under the threatened status; however, this species is found in the Tobacco Valley and the Upper Flathead River drainage (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Threatened and Endangered Species – Montana, web site; www.r6.fws.gov/mt4.html; May 23, 2000). This species has not been recorded on the Park Lake tract and will not be impacted by the proposed exchange.

Bo Stuart, Helena National Forest Hydrologist, states that the Park Lake tract consists of 46 acres of jurisdictional **wetland** (Flood Plain & Wetland Evaluation, January 10, 2001). Please refer to *Map 10* on the previous page, which shows all approximate wetlands.

Helena National Forest Soil Scientist Sue Farley reviewed the Park Lake location with Sue Dalbey (July 25, 2000) and confirmed that there are no **prime and unique farmlands** in this tract. Farley consulted maps and soil identifications listed in the unpublished report *Soil Surveys of the Helena National Forest* (USDA Forest Service, October 1989). Prime and unique farmlands will not be impacted on the Park Lake tract.

Fish & Wildlife

Transfer of ownership to the FS is expected to positively impact the critical habitat, diversity and abundance of wildlife and non-game species in the area.

Rainbow trout were planted annually starting in 1959. Several plants of Arctic grayling were made between 1963 and 1970 and now the fishery maintains itself by natural reproduction. Ron Spoon, FWP Fisheries Biologist in Townsend, MT, stated that current management practices include the planting of 4000 two-inch Yellowstone cutthroat trout annually. June 1999 net sampling revealed 72 grayling with 14% over 13 inches long; 13 cutthroats with 39% over 10 inches. Mr. Spoon indicated that the proposed land exchange would be neutral or slightly positive for angler access and the fisheries.

Mr. Spoon also stated that other species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered, will not be affected by the proposed land exchange. Bull trout and white sturgeon do not inhabit waters east of the Continental Divide. The pallid sturgeon and sturgeon chub do not inhabit the Park Lake drainage. The sturgeon chub and sicklefin chub are Candidates for Listing under the Endangered Species Act, but are found in the Yellowstone River in eastern Montana. The fluvial arctic grayling is found in the Big Hole River; Park Lake supports the lake-residing population of arctic grayling. This project will not affect the above species.

The Statewide Angling Pressure Estimates for 1997 calculated 2,551 anglers (+/- 639) annually at Park Lake; in 1999, 1,862 anglers (+/- 447) annually. Ninety-five to 100 percent of the estimated use was by resident anglers. The site is most recently considered 42nd in regional use ranking.

Gayle Joslin, Wildlife Biologist for FWP, stressed to Sue Dalbey (August 14, 1999) that the entire area is interconnected with a number of wetlands providing valuable habitat for

moose, black bear, mule deer, elk, and wolverine. In written communication to Sue Dalbey, June 19, 2000, Joslin confirmed that wolves and grizzly bears are known to cross through the area; and, there is no reason why lynx would not be present in the area. She re-iterated that if the FS does change the designation regarding off-highway vehicle use, wildlife habitat will be positively affected.

EA Engineering, Science and Technology prepared the *Threatened/Endangered Species Resource Report* in November, 1992 for the FS, which revealed the following occurrence of threatened or endangered species on the Park Lake tract. The endangered peregrine falcon and bald eagle are known to occur at this tract, as it is within their range during spring and fall migration. They also recognized that the area provides potential habitat for grizzly bear. (Note: the American peregrine falcon has recovered following restrictions on organochlorine pesticides and successful management activities: therefore, it was removed from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife on August 25, 1999. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service web site; www.r6.fws.gov/mt4.html; May 23, 2000)

A search for species of concern, threatened and endangered species by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (Natural Resource Information System) did not identify any species of special concern other than the arctic grayling, which has previously been discussed.

The following animals are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act (US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species in Montana, Endangered Species Act. December 2002.) and were considered in this environmental assessment. The tract may not hold habitat for some species, and therefore will not be specifically discussed.

Endangered - black-footed ferret, gray wolf, whooping crane, least tern, pallid sturgeon, white sturgeon (Kootenai River population);

Threatened - grizzly bear, bald eagle, piping plover, bull trout (Columbia River basin and St. Mary-Belly River populations), Canada lynx (contiguous U.S. population);

Proposed Threatened - mountain plover;

Candidates for listing as threatened or endangered - Arctic grayling (fluvial population), warm spring zaitzevian riffle beetle, black-tailed prairie dog, yellow-billed cuckoo (western population);

Proposed Critical Habitat – bull trout (Columbia River basin and St. Mary-Belly River populations: streams, lakes and reservoirs in the Clark Fork, Flathead and Kootenai river basins).

Wildlife Biologist, Gayle Joslin does not anticipate any negative impacts to the above listed animals resulting from Park Lake transferring to FS ownership.

Human Environment

Noise & Electrical Effects

Noise levels should decrease if the Clancy-Unionville Travel Plan is adopted and enforced, allowing for travel only on designated routes. No known changes to electrostatic or electromagnetic conditions are predicted. The remote locale of this tract should not affect radio or television reception.

Land Use

The productivity and profitability of the Park Lake tract may positively be affected if ownership transfers to FS. The Helena National Forest may implement methods to limit off road driving and camping in undesignated areas, thus increasing the use of the existing campground in the area. FS revenue may increase slightly due to this, because recreation funds would return to the Park Lake budget, rather than going to the overall FS accounts for re-allocation (Dave Payne, Recreation Planner for the Helena NF personal communication with Sue Dalbey, June 22, 2000).

The transfer corresponds with a current natural area and wildlife conservation designations in the Boulder Mountains. Current ownership by FWP poses an inconsistency of a small, linear tract of state land in the middle of NFS land. This parcel is remote and the proposed action will have little effect on residences. The dam re-construction would provide more safety from flooding or potential dam breech hazards to downstream residents.

Risk & Health Hazards

Hazardous materials testing was completed Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 analyze soils, water quality and fish health. These tests revealed allowable levels of hazardous materials (Contact FWP Lands Divisions for more details), primarily as a result of historic mining activities.

Little risk of explosion or release of hazardous substances in the event of an accident exists now, nor are the risks anticipated to rise with the transfer of ownership. This property would be absorbed into the Helena FS management plans and added to any existing emergency response plan they have in place, including wild fire responses. Chemical toxicants may be used for the control of noxious weeds or routine latrine sanitizing. The results of using these chemicals in a prudent manner would be considered a positive impact on the native vegetation and public health.

The dam has functioned for over 130 years. The improvements of the structure are intended to ensure safety for residences downstream and avoid a possible breech.

Community Impact

The immediate future will slightly change the distribution or density of humans in the Park Lake tract. The Helena National Forest will consider limiting vehicle access along the lakeshore, thus reducing the number of informal campsites and overnight use on the north and east shorelines of Park Lake. The area would still be accessible for day use and

foot access (Dave Payne, Recreation Planner for the Helena NF personal communication with Sue Dalbey, June 22, 2000). The FS does provide a 22-site campground near the lake, complete with paved roads, sites, picnic tables, fire rings, and latrines. Many visitors avoid the campground and associated fees by camping on the land currently owned by FWP.

The level of employment and social structure of a community are not expected to change. Industrial and commercial activity are limited in a national forest. Traffic hazards may be reduced due the possible closure of pioneered, rough dirt roads on FWP property, adjacent to the north end of the lake. Existing main access roads are expected to handle the change in traffic patterns. New parking areas are proposed by the FS, which will help reduce congestion along roadways. The FS would have initial costs for future capital improvements, site rehabilitation and protection measures. Future maintenance costs would also increase for the acquired parcel.

Taxes

In 1998, FWP paid approximately $280 to Jefferson County in lieu of taxes for the Park Lake FAS tract. It is estimated that the FS would pay an estimated $339 to Jefferson County. This is a combined figure of PILT funds (estimated $284) and payment from the 25% Fund (estimated $55) estimated from 1999 figures. Jefferson County could see an increase in revenue of over fifty dollars.

Public Services, Utilities

FS administrative costs are expected to increase with the acquisition of Park Lake (Dave Payne, Recreation Planner, Helena NF, written correspondence to Larry Cole, Lands Forester, Helena NF, June 16, 2000). Costs would increase for law enforcement, as well (Kurt Cuneo, Resource Assistant, Helena NF, written correspondence to Larry Cole, June 12, 2000). Rehabilitation work along the shoreline would require a funding increase for initial construction and continued maintenance.

The FS suggests that new facilities will be proposed in the next few years, such as designated parking areas away from the lakeshore, a lake-side trail accessible to persons with disabilities, one toilet, picnic tables, fire rings, and a bulletin board at the northern-most parking area. These services will require an environmental review prior to construction. Estimated funding is near $200,000. (Helena National Forest Capital Investment Program 1999-2003.)

The Park Lake tract includes approximately 0.3 **road** miles on which the U.S. currently has an easement to access the FS campground. The FS will assume ownership of this easement if the proposed exchange is completed, and therefore will result in no net gain in access for the U.S.

No revenue is collected by FWP at the Park Lake Fishing Access Site. Maintenance costs are $500-$1,000 annually, which covers some administrative costs and no improvements on the site.

Aesthetics & Recreation

Transfer of this property will preserve and maintain the scenic vistas and aesthetically desirable sights for the public. FS ownership has the potential to positively impact the aesthetic character of this tract by allowing reclamation along the lakeshores and limiting off road vehicle use, which would reduce erosion and encourage more wildlife use in the area.

Recreational day-use opportunities will continue if the proposed land exchange is completed. Some visitors may be disgruntled if OHV use and undesignated camping along the lakeshore is limited, while others may be pleased to see reclamation of the area.

There are no wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas in the vicinity.

Cultural & Historical Resources

The *Cultural Resources Inventory Report* prepared for the FS by Historical Research Associates, Inc, 1992, recommends the following resources eligible for listing on the National Register: four reservoir dams and the water conveyance canal which are clearly associated with the development of the Park Ditch Company (24JF726/24LC1048). These can be considered components of the larger ditch system and be counted as "contributing" resources to the system as a whole. They are associated with a specific and important aspect of the mining industry (water procurement for mine production). The physical remains are representative of a "type of construction" which reflects the technology and engineering specifications in use in the 1870s.

The FS is mandated to take into account the effects of any undertaking on the property included in or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The properties being transferred from FWP to the FS will be given cultural consideration pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA 16 U.S.C. 470 (f)) as federal property, which meet or exceed Montana cultural site protection requirements.

Evaluation of Mitigation or other Control Measures

Any future development by the FS will undergo an environmental review and appropriate public comment periods.

If a portion of the overall Alberton Gorge Land Exchange fails, this proposal to transfer Park Lake to the FS will likely fail as well. The transfer of this parcel is critical regarding the exchange of equal fishery values between land traded from FWP ownership at Park Lake and land gained in the Alberton Gorge corridor. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will ultimately decide if the fisheries values in the Gorge are equal to Park Lake.